



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2013 Work Plan

Date of Status Update Report: **October 22, 2012**

Date of Next Status Update Report: January 31, 2014

Date of Work Plan Approval:

Project Completion Date: **June 30, 2016**

Is this an amendment request? _____

PROJECT TITLE: Conservation Program Technical Assistance Grants

Project Manager: Tim Koehler

Affiliation: MN Board of Water and Soil Resources

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Location: statewide

Total ENRTF Project Budget:

ENRTF Appropriation: \$3,000,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$3,000,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2013, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

Appropriation Language:

DRAFT

I. PROJECT TITLE: Conservation Program Technical Assistance Grants

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Over the next five years, nearly 823,000 acres (60%) of Minnesota conservation lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will expire—a land area equivalent to Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey counties combined. CRP brings in \$100m annually in federal payments to landowners. CRP is the backbone of MN private lands conservation for clean water and wildlife habitat. Unless action is taken to continue protection of these lands, using a combination of conservation programs, they will likely be converted back into cropland. This could impact the associated water quality benefits that address critical priorities such as reducing sediment and nutrients, as well as providing a multitude of wildlife benefits. This proposal seeks funding to ensure continued protection of those acres by putting more staff resources on the ground in high workload counties to work with landowners on re-enrollment options. This staffing initiative is expected to be completed within a 3 year timeline.

Employment of field staff who will work one-on-one with landowners to re-enroll expiring lands into new 10-15 year CRP contracts or other conservation program offerings that best meet the landowners and states objectives. Our goal is to re-enroll more than 400,000 ac. (approx. 50%) over the next 5 years, with at least 170,000 of those acres being re-enrolled in the next three years during this project. Priority will be given to lands identified as critical using the BWSR Ecological Ranking Tool developed with University of MN with financial assistance from the ENRTF.

**Expiring Minnesota
CRP**

Year	Acres
2012	292,429
2013	130,246
2014	207,841
2015	101,634
2016	90,803
Total:	822,953

Expiring CRP Wetlands	Acres*
Total	233,969
Targeted & Ranked**	32,003
Enrollment Goal	16,000

Expiring CRP Riparian Areas	Acres*
<i>Total</i>	122,100
<i>Targeted & Ranked**</i>	122,100
<i>Enrollment Goal</i>	64,000

* Derived from 2007 CRP spatial data made available through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).
 ** Performed using the ENRTF-funded Ecological Ranking Tool (ERT) – *Ecological Ranking of CRP and Other Critical Lands, 2009-2011.*

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 80,000 acres (10%) of the most critical expiring CRP retained.	9/30/2016

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of January 31, 2014:

Project Status as of July 31, 2014:

Project Status as of January 31, 2015:

Project Status as of July 31, 2015:

Project Status as of January 31, 2016:

Project Status as of July 31, 2016:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: CRP Retention-MN Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP)

Description: Minnesota will benefit from the continuation of the \$110 million that USDA currently spends annually in this state on CRP. This activity will employ local FBAP technicians to target landowners with expiring CRP contracts to discuss re-enrollment opportunities and alternative conservation program options. More than 170,000 acres of MN expiring CRP acres will be enrolled over the next 3 years. A Request for Proposals will solicit local government interest in hiring field staff to concentrate on direct marketing and enrollment assistance with landowners. We expect to target no less than 50 counties within the agricultural landscape of MN. In some cases a more regional approach will be taken to combine adjacent counties and workload. Eligible applicants would include the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), or other local or state unit of government, or their authorized agent. BWSR will employ or contract to employ a 1.0FTE project coordinator that will provide leadership at the field level in hiring, training, and tracking and reporting all project activities. This position will serve under the direction of the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP). BWSR will also hire .1FTE Project Manager, unclassified position, to supervise the overall project and provide leadership at the central office as it relates to: BWSR board authorization of project, RFP development and approval, reimbursement procedures for staffing, project reporting and budget monitoring that can only be accomplished in the St. Paul office.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 3,000,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$3,000,000

Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. Staffing: employ 28 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's) for year 1. Staff will be making direct landowner contacts to explain relevant programs and walk them through the enrollment process. We anticipate staff coverage in up to 50 agricultural based counties.	December 31, 2014	\$1,412,500
2. Staffing: employ 28 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's) for year 2. Staff will be making direct landowner contacts to explain relevant programs and walk them through the enrollment process. We anticipate staff coverage in up to 50 agricultural based counties.	June 30, 2016	\$1,412,500
3. Staffing: employ 1.0 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's) Coordination. Staff will be based in the field and provide leadership at the field level in hiring, training, and tracking and reporting all project activities.	June 30, 2016	\$ 150,000
4. Staffing: employ 0.1 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's) Project Manager. Staff will conduct BWSR board authorization of project, RFP development and approval, reimbursement procedures for staffing, project reporting and budget monitoring in St. Paul.	June 30, 2016	\$ 25,000

Activity Status as of January 31, 2014:

Activity Status as of July 31, 2014:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2015:

Activity Status as of July 31, 2015:

Activity Status as of January 31, 2016:

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: Tracking of MN conservation estate can be found at http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/COENROL_2012.pdf. This document is updated each year in August and reflects the acres of MN land enrolled in conservation programs.

Status as of January 31, 2014:

Status as of July 31, 2014:

Status as of January 31, 2015:

Status as of July 31, 2015:

Status as of January 31, 2016:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Personnel:	\$ 175,000	Employment of 1 full time project coordinator for 2 full years (To Be Determined). Employment of .1 FTE to serve as project manager for 2 years (Tim Koehler).
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$2,825,000	Employment of 28 FTE's field staff for full 2 years during project.
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$3,000,000	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: N/A

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500: N/A

Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) funded with this ENRTF appropriation: 2.2

Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) estimated to be funded through contracts with this ENRTF appropriation: 56

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state			
	\$	\$	
State			
DNR-Heritage Enhancement	\$150,000	\$	Enhance FTE Opportunities
BWSR-Clean Water Fund	\$100,000		Enhance FTE Opportunities
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$	\$	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: Bill Penning, MN DNR, Matt Holland, Pheasants Forever, Mark Oja, USDA-NRCS, MN Soil and Water Conservation Districts

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: Employment of 28 FTE's in MN to address expiring CRP will work to retain 170,000ac. in CRP, or other conservation programs, over the next 3 years.

C. Spending History:

Funding Source	M.L. 2007 or FY08	M.L. 2008 or FY09	M.L. 2009 or FY10	M.L. 2010 or FY11	M.L. 2011 or FY12-13
ENRTF			\$1,000,000 Subd.4(i)		\$625,000 Subd.04(l)
MN DNR-Heritage Enhancement			\$300,000		\$300,000
MN BWSR-Clean Water Fund			\$200,000		\$220,000
USDA-NRCS Contribution Agreement with Pheasants Forever					912,000

VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: N/A

IX. MAP(S):See Map

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: N/A

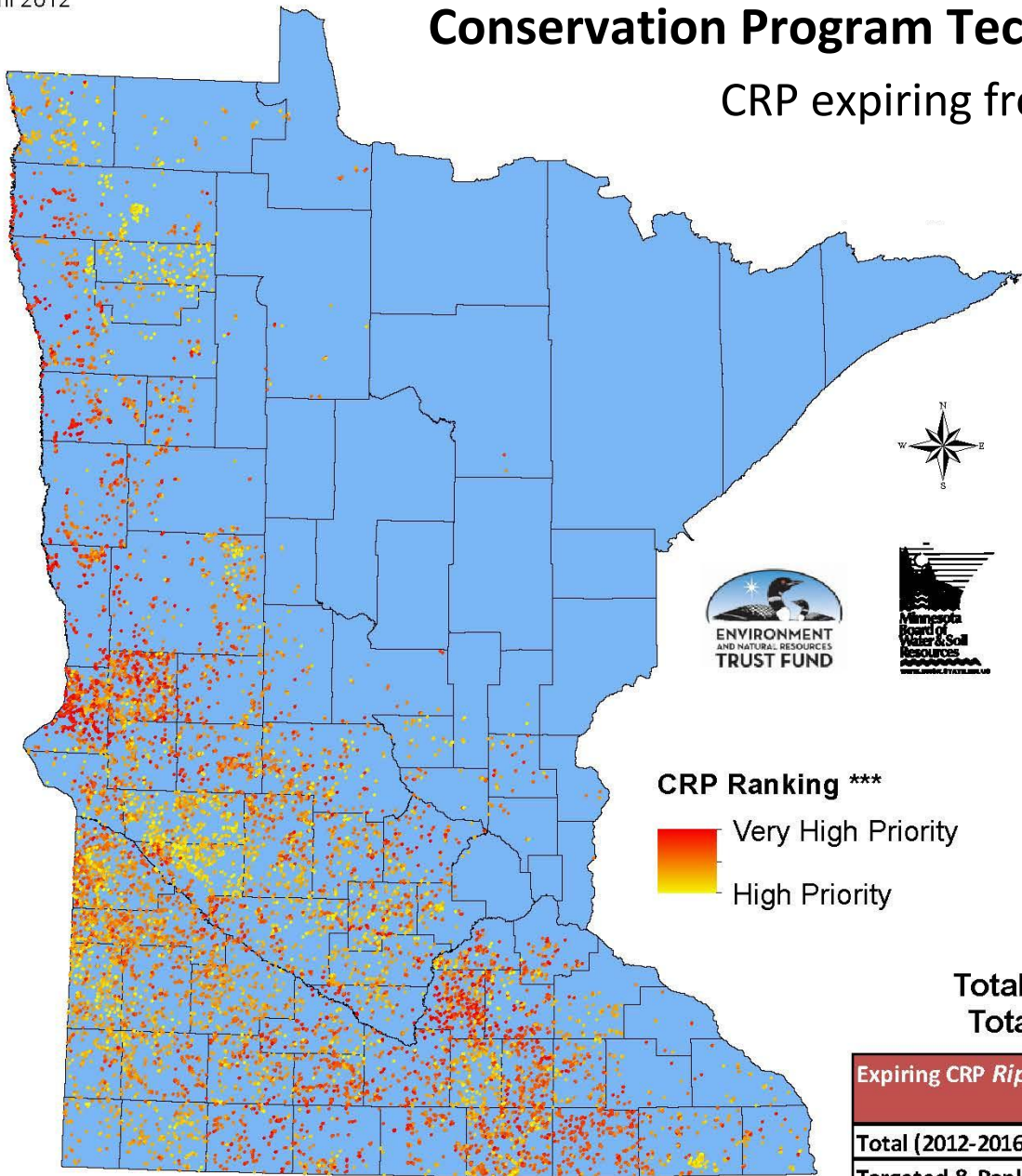
XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted not later than January 31, 2014, July 31, 2014, January 31, 2015, July 31, 2015, January 31, 2016. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2016 as requested by the LCCMR.

Attachment A: Budget Detail for M.L. 2013 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Projects					
Project Title: Conservation Program Technical Assistance Grants					
Legal Citation: <i>Fill in your project's legal citation from the appropriation language</i>					
Project Manager: Tim Koehler					
M.L. 2013 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 3,000,000					
Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years ending June 30, 2016					
Date of Update: October 22, 2013					
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET					
	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	CRP Retention-MN Farm Bill Assistance Partnership				
TBD Project Coordinator: \$150,000 1.0FTE (75% salary 25% benefits)	150,000		150,000	150,000	150,000
Tim Koehler, Project Manager: \$25,000 .1 FTE (75% salary 25% benefits) Unclassified position.	25,000		25,000	25,000	25,000
Contracts with SWCD's or other partners to employ 28 FTE's (Farm Bill Assistance Technicians) over a 2 year period from July 1, 2013-June 30, 2016.	2,825,000		2,825,000	2,825,000	2,825,000
COLUMN TOTAL	\$3,000,000		\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000

Conservation Program Technical Assistance Grants

CRP expiring from 2012 through 2016



CRP Ranking ***

Very High Priority

High Priority

*** Expiring parcels were ranked using the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) created by BWSR and partners through the ENRTF funded project Statewide Ecological Ranking of CRP and Other Critical Lands.

Total Expiring Acres = 822,953 Acres **
Total Targeted Acres = 142,920 Acres

Expiring CRP <i>Riparian Areas</i>	Acres*	Expiring CRP <i>Wetlands</i>	Acres*
Total (2012-2016)	110,918	Total (2012-2016)	208,998
Targeted & Ranked***	110,918	Targeted & Ranked**	32,002
Enrollment Goal	64,000	Enrollment Goal	16,000

* Based on 2007 CRP spatial data from the Farm Service Agency

** Based on FSA acreage reported on the FSA website

